

THE THREAD OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Infancy

I have needs.

I am totally dependent on you to interpret and meet my needs.

When you consistently and predictably meet my needs by feeding me, changing me, holding me, comforting me and playing with me, I can trust you and know that I am safe and important.

Toddlerhood

I am separate from you.

I explore.

I leave you and come back; you let me go a little bit.

You watch me.

I can be a separate person and control my environment.

You will still be there and love me even if I say no and disagree.

You laugh with me, clap for my new achievements and let me learn to do things on my own.

You read my favorite stories over and over; just the way I like.

Young elementary

I take more steps on my own.

I am excited about all the new things in my life; friends, school and activities.

You are still by my side.

You check situations out to make sure that I am safe.

You don't leave me alone for long periods of time. You help me take the steps into the wider community.

You play with me and read to me.

You encourage me to make friends.

You reassure me when I'm scared.

You help me with schoolwork.

Elementary

I am learning so much and am better coordinated in my fine and large motor development.

I am making close friends and love playing with them.

I am in more activities and you come and watch and cheer me on.

You help me with my schoolwork and meet with the teachers and counselor.

I love each of my parents the very same.

Middle School

I am self conscious and very critical of myself and others.

I have to cope with a lot of changes in my life.

You cannot be right; I have to move away from you.

Peer acceptance is everything. They know everything; parents know very little.

I challenge you all the time. I like it; I use my mind and exercise my independence.
I still need you; but please don't hug me in front of my friends.
I am always tempted to be impulsive and am exposed to many things that can be dangerous.
I need supervision and adult feedback or interaction.

High School

I like you. You have strengths and weaknesses. So do I. That is OK.
I'm leaving home soon; I need your support. I'm independent. Sometimes it's scary.
I need you to be there for me. I need help in making decisions about the rest of my life.
I need reassurance that I can make it in the big world out there.
I am a lovable person who can be part of a loving relationship.
I need supervision. I have lots of pressures and lots of temptations in the world outside my home.

THE THREAD UNRAVELS

Infancy

I am all alone. No one understands me.
I cry and cry and no one comes.
My needs aren't met.
I fight; I cry; I give up.
I don't sleep right.
I am listless.
I don't learn.
I feel unloved.
I don't try new things.
I give up.
I can't trust.

Toddlerhood

I can't be separate.
I try and sometimes I am punished.
I say "no" but am not allowed to.
I may want to explore but you may not be there for me when I return.
You don't celebrate my achievements.
Sometimes I am defiant. I don't care.
Other times, I run to strangers for love and comfort.

Young Elementary

I'm afraid to leave you; you may not be there when I return.
I feel scared; I know about death and earthquakes and other scary things.

I do neat things like learn to ride a two-wheeler. Is there anyone there to clap for me? I got 100% on a spelling test.
The world is a big scary place. I'm afraid to try.

Older Elementary

I feel so responsible for your happiness. Did I cause all of this?
I don't think I should leave the house to play with my friends. You need me.
Hey, I'm tough. I don't need friends. They're just babies. I'll show them on the playground.
I am so loyal to you but you're not loyal back to me. I am building a "wall."
I have no help with my schoolwork. I don't know how to ask for help. I am behind.

Middle School

I don't need you. I never did. Stay away from me.
I can manipulate people; you, too; and get what I want. I don't care.
I can't empathize.
I am ready to explode.
School is boring. I don't learn anything good.
Drugs and street culture become my friends.

High School

I have walls of anger hiding my pain.
Drugs, like alcohol, numb me.
Love-it means nothing. I get what I want – whenever.
Adults don't care. They don't listen. They let you down.
What will I do for money? I don't have many skills.
I dropped out of school. No one cares.